

Testimony to the Connecticut Joint Committee on the Judiciary by  
Stephen Hitner.

March 19, 2012

**Ladies and Gentlemen of the Judiciary** thank you very much for allowing me to speak with you today.

**My name is Stephen Hitner**, the President of the group **Mass Alimony Reform**, and an active participant on the study group appointed by the **Mass Joint Committee on the Judiciary** to study the need for alimony reform in Massachusetts. We met, we listened, and we found solutions.

**As I stated**, I come from your neighboring state of Massachusetts where we had very similar issues that your citizens have concerning the issue of alimony today in Connecticut.

**At that time**, receiving spouses were cohabitating and not marrying to avoid the loss of their alimony

**Receivers of alimony** were not being encouraged to prepare for their retirement due to lifetime alimony awards. **Payers** could not afford to save for retirement due to a lifetime burden of alimony, many of which were short term marriages.

**There was no consistency or predictability** for an outcome for those in the predicament of divorce. **Litigation would go on forever.**

**A second spouse's** income was considered fair game to an ex-spouse who refused to work.

**Women would not marry** the love of their life to avoid their assets and income considered in a complaint for modification.

**A grass roots movement of victims**, similar to the people testifying here today from your State of Connecticut, began a movement in Massachusetts.

We were heard by the Massachusetts legislature and a task force was created including all interested parties. **You do not need a Task Force.**

**The group created**, included, **the Chief Justice of the Probate Courts**, representatives of **the Mass Bar, The Boston Bar the Women's Bar**, the **American Academy of Matrimonial lawyers**, representatives of the family law section of the **Women's Bar who deal with abused and indigent women** and myself as President of MAR, representing the victims.

**We accepted recommendations** from studies performed by the American Academy of Matrimonial lawyers The American Bar Association, and the many horror stories presented by the victims.

**The Bill submitted**, here after modifications to meet the situation in Connecticut, is the result of the work done by those respected groups. **You do not need to re-invent the wheel.**

**Since the Massachusetts Alimony Reform Act of 2011** was made into law, many people have been getting married who otherwise would not have.

**People now have the ability to plan for their retirement.** Litigants are settling contentious cases that would have lasted years and broken them financially.

**Former alimony receivers** are going back to work to enjoy the benefits of self support and independence from a former spouse.

**The Alimony Reform Act of 2011** was accepted unanimously by the Mass House and Senate and signed into law by our Governor this past Sept. **We had absolutely no opposition.**

**It is up to you to follow the lead**, listen to the horror stories, accept the recommendation for Guidelines and Structure presented by the National Bar Association, and the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, and **bring the State of Connecticut into the 21<sup>st</sup> century** like we did in your neighboring State of Massachusetts.

Thank you for your time.

Stephen K. Hitner, Pres. Mass Alimony Reform.